

## A further step towards the knowledge of the Oriental batrachofauna

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Djoko T. ISKANDAR *The amphibians of Java and Bali* Research and Development Centre for Biology, LIPI, Field Guide Series, 1998: i-xx + 1-117, 26 colour plates. ISBN 979-579-014-5

This booklet is an interesting contribution to the knowledge of frogs of the Oriental region for two reasons. This is in fact the first comprehensive work on this area since the book *The Amphibia of the Indo-Australian archipelago* published by P. N. VAN KAMPEN in 1923. Secondly, its interest is increased by the fact that Java was the first country where frogs from this part of the world were studied by western scientists, both in the field and in the collections. Frogs of Java were sent by KUHN and VAN HASSELT, BOETTGER, MACLEOD and others (see ADIFER, 1989) to Leiden (Netherlands) and exchanged with Museums all over Europe. As a consequence, many of the widely distributed species of South East Asia have their type locality in Java (Indonesia). For these reasons many scientists and amateurs were awaiting a revised guide of the species of this island.

This book clearly is not only meant for the scientists specialized in the Oriental batrachofauna but also for the people working in the field and concerned about conservation matters. It includes a chapter on the biology of amphibians, and an explanation of the classification adopted. The author adopts the latest classifications proposed for the frogs of this region, accepting a family Megophryidae and the divisions of the Bufonidae and Ranidae, in particular the restricted concept of the genus *Rana* as proposed by DUBOIS (1987: 1992).

Two keys should help the reader to identify the adults and tadpoles of the amphibian species. The adult key helps to find the identification at the family or subfamily level (for certain monotypic families the species is indicated). The author also proposes figures presenting drawings of many of the species and showing their general body shape. Such drawings can be very useful to help identification. The key for the tadpoles allows identification at the species-level and it is completed by drawings of the general morphology of the tadpoles and of their mouthparts.

In the systematic chapter, amphibians of two orders, including eight families, are presented, giving for each of the 41 species the scientific name with its etymology, the English name and the local name. The type-localities and type-specimens are indicated. A short description is followed by data on adults: sex, skin texture and colour. The descriptive part is completed by a series of ecological information concerning reproduction, habitat and diet. The distribution is given indicating precise localities where the species has been found, giving a reference to collection specimens, and it is completed by data on the distribution outside Java and Bali. Finally the author tries to cover synonyms and diseases related species. In this section are listed some of the little known related species. A species of the genus *Kalophrynus* is described as new in this book. Three of the listed species were introduced by man to Java.

The book presents then a bibliography which does not aim at being complete, it is mostly explaining the technical terms used and a list of the scientific names of the amphibians of Java and Bali. An index to the scientific names and to Indonesian and English names allows to find relevant information. The book finishes with very useful colour photos of the species presented in the previous chapters. They show the general aspect of the species and also some cases of colour variation within species, as for example *Rana fusca* showing a blue colour variant.

The book clearly displays some weaknesses concerning nomenclature and treatment of synonyms. It does not give original references to names of the species mentioned, and does not indicate if names listed are

synonyms, different combinations or even other species which are close to the species at stake. This may seem to be a minor drawback, but it is important for information retrieval in bibliography especially if the book is to be used by non-specialists. There are no references in relation to the taxonomy adopted by the author which would permit the reader to deepen its knowledge. Some of the synonymies proposed, as for *Bufo chlorogaster* Daudin, 1807 (see DU BOIS & OHLER, 1999), are not supported by any data. It would be very useful to join a map showing the localities mentioned, or to indicate coordinates for these localities.

This book is clearly a first step to a field guide of the amphibians of Java and Bali. As acknowledged by the author in the *Foreword*, the book should be completed concerning distribution data, but also concerning taxonomic information. This field-guide will nevertheless be a useful tool to advance our state of knowledge on the batrachofauna of this important subregion.

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